

العصور الوسطى

al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā

The Newsletter of Middle East Medievalists

Volume 1

April, 1990

Number 2

Report on the 1989 Annual Meeting

The first meeting of Middle East Medievalists (MEM) was held in Toronto on November 15, 1989 in conjunction with the twenty-third annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association. MEM adopted its by-laws as amended. Copies of the by-laws are available to members on request from the Secretary-Treasurer. In addition, the assembled membership elected Sam Gellens as President, Michael Bates as Vice President, and Chris Taylor as Secretary/ Treasurer. These three officers, Richard Bulliet and Abbas Hamdani were elected to serve as the Board of Directors of MEM until the next annual meeting in November, 1990.

The MEM sponsored panel on periodization in Islamic history was a great success at the Toronto MESA meeting. Approximately 100 people attended the session and an interesting and lively discussion followed the formal presentations.

MEM Officially Affiliates With MESA

In January MEM was officially informed by the Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) that we have been granted status as an affiliated organization. This entitles MEM to hold its annual meeting during the "pre-session" day of the MESA gathering and to co-sponsor panels presented at MESA.

The MEM Board is currently reviewing the possibility of also affiliating with the American Historical Association (AHA). This process requires approximately eight months. While it is already too late to secure affiliate status for the 1990 AHA convention, we are interested in what you think about such a link with AHA. Please

let members of the Board know what you feel about this option.

Plans for the 1990 Annual Meeting

Our 1990 annual meeting will be held in San Antonio, Texas on Saturday, November 10, 1990. All members of MEM are cordially invited to attend. Exact details of the meeting location and time will be provided in the October issue of *al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā*.

In conjunction with the regular 1990 MESA meeting we hope to co-sponsor five panels. Assuming that all panels are approved by the MESA screening committee, we think that medievalists will be pleased by the number of interesting presentations. Panels tentatively scheduled include:

(1) "**Generational Continuities: Families and Traditions.**" The panelists will be: Matthew Gordon, James Lindsey, Shaun Marmon, Lutz Richter-Bernberg and Elizabeth Savage. The chair will be Jere Bacharach and Stephen Humphreys will serve as the discussant.

(2) "**The Political Economy of Agriculture in the Medieval Islamic World.**" The panelists include: Gladys Frantz-Murphy, Mahmud Ibrahim, Maria Subtelny and Peter von Sivers. The chair will be Mahmud Ibrahim and Andrew Watson will be the discussant.

(3) "**Issues and Directions in Pre-Modern Islamic Historiography.**" The panelists will be: Sam Gellens, Michael Morony, Joseph Roberts and Christopher Taylor. Sam Gellens will be the chair and Gladys Frantz-Murphy will serve as the discussant.

(4) "**Arabia in the Medieval Period.**" The panelists include: Fred Donner, Michael Bates, Tayeb El-Hibri and Ed Keall. Fred Donner will

be the chair and McGuire Gibson will be the discussant.

(5) **"New and Revised Genres in 4th/10th Century Arabic Prose."** The panelists include: Annie C. Higgins, Katherine Howe Lang, Marion Holmes Katz and Sheila Baumiller. Wadad al-Qadi will serve as both the chair and discussant for this panel.

If you know of another medieval panel scheduled for MESA, please send the Secretary/Treasurer a complete copy of the panel proposal so that we can inform MEM members in our fall newsletter. In our October newsletter we hope to provide you with a full description of each panel, as well as the times and locations of each session. We hope that MEM members are already planning to be at the 1990 MESA meeting, and that you will make a special effort to attend those sessions devoted to the medieval period.

Saturday evening, November 11th we are hoping to arrange for a small informal reception so that MEM members will have an opportunity to meet each other, catch up on old friendships and exchange ideas. Keep your eyes open for the October newsletter which will contain all of the relevant details.

News of Interest to the MEMbership

In this column we will try to relay news of interest to all members of MEM. If you have any important information about resources, research aides, institutions, useful new publications, etc., which you would like to share with the general membership, please contact the Secretary/Treasurer to arrange inclusion of this information in future newsletters. Remember, this is your organization. One of MEM's primary functions is to facilitate communication in our field.

Lawrence Conrad has requested that we inform members about the **"Late Antiquity and Early Islam Project."** The Project, which is supported by the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust, involves a major interdisciplinary research endeavor covering the critical period of transition from the Near Eastern world of Late Antiquity to that of medieval Islam. Chronologically, the period encompassed by the project stretches from the death of Justinian in A.D. 565 until the collapse

of the Umayyad caliphate in 750. The geographical scope of the project is defined as including Constantinople and Asia Minor, Syria, Iraq, Arabia and Egypt. The directors of the project include: Professor Averil Cameron (responsible for Late Antiquity and Byzantium), Dr. Lawrence I. Conrad (responsible for Early Islam and the Christian East) and Dr. Geoffrey King (responsible for Archaeology and Art History). The overall aims of the project are to encourage interdisciplinary contacts and research in the field of early medieval Near Eastern history, and to provide regular opportunities and scholarly tools necessary to promote these contacts and make the relevant source materials more accessible. These goals will be pursued in a number of ways; most notably through a series of colloquia and through the publication of a new series entitled "The Late Antiquity and Early Islam Series." Items in this series will be published by Darwin Press, and will include both proceedings of the Project's meetings as well as a corpus of key materials and research. In addition, the series will also undertake works of a reference character. The directors of the Project envision a cooperative international venture involving the broadest possible range of expertise and participation. All interested colleagues are invited to contact one of the project's directors. Their addresses are as follows: Professor Averil Cameron, Department of Classics, King's College London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS; Dr. Lawrence I. Conrad, Wellcome Institute, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP; and Dr. Geoffrey R. D. King, Department of Near and Middle East, SOAS, Thornhaugh St., Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG.

We would like to bring to the attention of members of MEM the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, the Spanish equivalent of the French C.N.R.S. The Consejo acts as sponsor and coordinator for two fine institutions. One is the Departamento de Estudios Arabes, Instituto de Filologia (Duque de Medinaceli, 6, 28104 MADRID; Telephone 91/429 20 17; Contact: Dr. Mercedes Garcia-Arenal) in Madrid. The other is the Escuela de Estudios Arabes in Granada (Casa del Chapiz, Cuesta del Chapiz, 22 18010 GRANADA; Telephone: 958/22 22 90). The Instituto is primarily concerned with Hispano-Arab art and architecture, relations of the Iberian Peninsula with North Africa, and society and culture in Islamic Spain. It publishes a journal, *Al-Qanṭara*, which is the successor to *Al-Andalus* (1933-1978) and a continuing series of excellent monographs. The chief focus of the

Escuela is Arabic language and literature in Islamic Spain. Both institutions welcome visitors.

Milestones

In this column the editors of *al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* hope to inform members of significant news involving individual medievalists in our field. It would be very helpful if members would be so kind as to inform the Secretary/Treasurer of new professional appointments, new publications, academic awards and honors or other developments of significant interest to the general membership of MEM.

We would like to note with congratulations the following appointments: Linda Northrup, Assistant Professor, of Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of Toronto; Jonathan P. Berkey, Assistant Professor of Religion at Mount Holyoke College; Denise Spellberg, Assistant Professor of History and Middle East Studies at the University of Texas, Austin.

Sam Gellens has recently been awarded a Fellowship for Independent Summer Study which is funded by NEH and the Council for Basic Education. Sam's project is entitled: "Regional and Local Identities in Medieval Islamic History: A Comparison of Muslim Spain and Yemen." At the MESA meeting in Toronto Chris Taylor was awarded first place in the 1989 competition for the Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award. Chris' dissertation is entitled: "The Cult of the Saints in Late Medieval Egypt."

It is with sincere regret that we inform members of the deaths of two prominent medievalists. Archibald R. Lewis died on Sunday, February 4th in Tucson. Professor Lewis taught medieval history at the University of Texas at Austin for 16 years and at the University of Massachusetts from 1969 to 1985. Professor Lewis received his doctoral degree from Princeton University, and published a dozen books on medieval history. His most recent work was *Nomads and Crusaders*.

Michael Dols died last December. He was also a graduate of Princeton University. A specialist in the history of Islamic medicine, he was best known for his seminal work entitled *The Black Death in the Middle East*.

Please Join MEM Now!

We would like to thank all of you who have taken the time to send in your membership applications and dues. There are still a number of people on our mailing list who have not yet joined MEM officially. If you have not yet joined, please do so now. Dues for 1990 are \$12.50. Please send a check in U.S. dollars (drawn on U.S. bank) made out to "Middle East Medievalists" to Dr. Christopher S. Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer, Middle East Medievalists, P.O. Box 705A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520.

Please send all news items and correspondence concerning *al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā*, the MEM Newsletter, to: Dr. Christopher S. Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer, Middle East Medievalists, P.O. Box 705A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520



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